

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6941

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

AMCONSUL MUNICH

UNCLAS MOSCOW 3771

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: BREZHNEV IN ALMA-ATA

1. SUMMARY. BREZHNEV'S APPEARANCE AT MARCH 15 ALMA-ATA CELEBRATION OF 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF OPENING OF VIRGIN LANDS WAS BOTH PERSONAL TRIUMPH AND PLATFORM FOR ANNOUNCING FURTHER OUTLINES OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. BREZHNEV SPOKE FOR TWO HOURS (TELEVISED ON PRIME TIME IN MOSCOW). HIS PERFORMANCE WAS UNINSPIRED DURING FIRST HOUR OF CONGRATULATIONS FOR HEROES OF VIRGIN LANDS. BUT HE BECAME ANIMATED WHEN SPEAKING OF HIS NEWEST PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE, AND IN A BURST OF ENTHUSIASM DESCRIBED THE INTERFARM ASSOCIATIONS AS "CORPORATIONS" (KORPORATSIY), WHICH PRAVDA BLUE-PENCILLED DEVELOPING AT GREATER LENGTH IDEAS PRESENTED AT DECEMBER 1973 PLENUM, BREZHNEV ARGUED FOR SPECIALIZATION AS WELL AS ENLARGEMENT OF NEW INTERFARM ASSOCIATIONS AND CITED RECENT EXPERIENCE IN MOLDAVIA, BELORUSSIA, AND UKRAINE. BREZHNEV WARNED AGAINST HASTE, CAMPAIGNS AND

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ECESSES, AND BARRED THE CESSATION OF SMALL-SCALE

PRODUCTION OF COMMODITIES NEEDED FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION OR SALE.

3. HE CRITICIZED THE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL ADMINISTRATION AS TOO COMPLICATED AND INEFFECTIVE. HE CALLED FOR A NEW SYSTEM WHICH WOULD MEET FOUR BASIC REQUIREMENTS: A) IT MUST IMPLEMENT STANDARD STATE POLICY IN AGRICULTURE, B) IT MUST CAREFULLY STIPULATE JURISDICTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VARIOUS LEADERSHIP LEVELS, C) IT MUST COMBINE CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP IN PLANNING WITH LOCAL FLEXIBILITY IN EXECUTION, D) IT MUST BE SIMPLE, LOCATED CLOSE TO PRODUCTION, AND EFFECTIVE. BREZHNEV NOTED LOCAL PROPOSALS ALREADY ARRIVING AND WARNED AGAINST ACTING BY GUESS OR INTUITION.

4. BREZHNEV ANNOUNCED ANOTHER DECISION RAISED AT THE DECEMBER PLENUM: A RECENT PARTY DECREE TO UPGRADE THE NONBLACK EARTH AREAS OF THE RSFSR WITH A DEADLINE OF 1990. A SUM OF 35 BILLION RUBLES IS TO BE SPENT ON THIS PROJECT IN THE NEXT FYP ALONE.

5. BREZHNEV ALSO ANNOUNCED TO THE SOVIET PUBLIC THE DECISION TO BUILD A RAILROAD LINE FROM THE BAYKAL TO THE AMUR WHICH WILL CROSS EASTERN SIBERIA AND THE FAR EAST AND BE NUCLEUS FOR NEW SURGE OF COLONIZATION. KOMSOMOLS WILL BE ENLISTED FOR THIS SHOCK PROJECT. WHILE ANTI-CHINESE STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT NOT DIRECTLY MENTIONED, ONE SPEAKER IN ANOTHER CONTEXT RECALLED 1955 BREZHNEV SPEECH WHICH REFERRED TO NEED TO "CREATE IN THE EAST A POWERFUL FIST, BOTH FOR PEACEFUL CONSTRUCTION AND FOR DEFENSE."

6. RELATIVELY SHORT INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SECTION OF ALMA ATA SPEECH DEVOTED SIGNIFICANT PORTION TO POMPIDOU VISIT AND HIS TRIP TO CUBA. OTHERWISE IT WAS NOTEWORTHY ONLY FOR VEHEMENCE WITH WHICH BREZHNEV CRITICIZED WESTERN FOES OF DETENTE. CONTINUING LINE HE TOOK IN MARCH 10 INTERVIEW WITH FRENCH JOURNALISTS, HE SINGLED OUT BOURGEOIS PRESS FOR DISTORTING SOVIET POLICY. HE UNCLASSIFIED

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MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER THAT ATTACKS BY WESTERN FOES OF PEACE HAD BEEN FACTORED INTO SOVIET CALCULATIONS AND WOULD NOT DEFELECT USSR FROM ITS COURSE.

7. CEREMONIAL MEETING ATTENDED BY DELEGATIONS FROM ALL REPUBLICS AND MANY OF MAJOR GRAIN-GROWING KRAYS AND OBLASTS. DELEGATION LEADERS INCLUDED POLITBURO MEMBERS KUNAYEV, SHCHERBITSKIY, MASHEROV, ROMANOV,

SOLOMENTSEV. DEFMIN GRECHKO ALSO PRESENT. SPEAKERS
EXTREMELY GENEROUS IN PRAISE OF BREZHNEV AND HIS
QUALITIES. SEVEAL DELEGATION LEADERS DID NOT SPEAK, BUT
ONLY ALTAYSKIY KRAY LEADER GEORGIYEV SPECIFICALLY
ENDORSED NEW INTERFARM ASSOCIATIONS.

8. COMMENT: BREZHNEV SEEMS TO BE ENCOUNTERING SOME
RESISTANCE TO HIS NEW AGRICULTURE SCHEME. THE IDEAS
WERE ANNOUNCED AT THE DECEMBER PLENUM AND LEAKED TO
THE PUBLIC SHORTLY AFTER IN A PRAVDA EDITORIAL. RECENT
PUBLICATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTION OF BREZHNEV'S
SPEECH TO THE DECEMBER PLENUM IN HIS COMPIATION OF
FARM SPEECHES FURTHER SPREAD THE WORD. THE ALMA-ATA
SPEECH FILLED OUT THE PICTURE EVEN MORE BUT ONLY ONE
ENDORSEMENT WAS FORTHCOMING. PRAVDA MARCH 17 REVIEW
OF FOREIGN PRESS REACTION TO BREZHNEV'S SPEECH NOTED
BRIEFLY ONLY WASHINGTON POST AND NYT REMARKS ON FARM
SCHEME. PRAVDA MARCH 18 FRONT PAGED BALTIMORE SUN
COMMENTS ON FARM PROGRAM.

9. THE PRIMARY VICTIM OF THE NEW SCHEME PROBABLY
WOULD BE THE AGRICULTURAL BUREAUCRACY, ABLY DEFENDED
IN THE PAST BY FORMER AGMIN MATSKEVICH AND NOW LED BY
POLITBURO MEMBER POLYANSKIY. THE LATTER SUFFERED A
DEMOTION WHEN APPOINTED AGMIN. IT REMAINS TO BE
SEEN WHAT THE OUTCOME OF BREZHNEV'S INITIATIVE WILL BE.
IN ANY CASE, MUCH TIME MUST ELAPSE BEFORE EVEN A
SUCCESSFUL CHANGE OVER WOULD PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT
RESULTS.
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